# BULL-DOG DRUMMOND

## *The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull*

### *By* CYRIL McNEILE
"SAPPER"



### "PEACE INCREDIBLY TEDIOUS"

*Demobilized officer, finding peace incredibly tedious, would welcome diversion. Legitimate, if possible; but crime, if of a comparatively humorous description, no objection. Excitement essential. Would be prepared to consider permanent job if suitably impressed by applicant for his services. Reply at once Box X10."*

*My dear Box X10.—I don't know whether your advertisement was a joke; I suppose it must have been. But I read it this morning, and it's just possible, X10, just possible, you mean it. And if you do, you're the man I want. I can offer you excitement and probably crime. I'm up against it, X10. For a girl I've bitten off rather more than I can chew. I want help—badly. Will you come to the Carlton for tea tomorrow afternoon? I want to have a look at you and see if I think you are genuine. Wear a white flower in your buttonhole.*

**So advertises Capt. Hugh Drummond, D. S. O., late of His Majesty's Royal Loamshires. So answers Phyllis Benton. And so begins a truly stirring story. For Phyllis is sure up against it. Her dear old father is involved with a clever and powerful band of international criminals, one of whom is bent on marrying her. Bull-Dog Drummond befriends the girl. Then begin battle, murder and sudden death quite comparable for thrills with Bull-Dog's war adventures in No Man's Land. And don't forget the adorable Phyllis.**

**This engrossing story is by Cyril McNeile, who under the pen name of "Sapper" has the whole English-speaking world across the Atlantic reading his books.**

### PROLOGUE

—1—

In the month of December, 1918, and on the very day that a British cavalry division marched into Cologne, with flags flying and bands playing as the conquerors of a beaten nation, the manager of the Hotel Nationale in Berne received a letter. Its contents appeared to puzzle him somewhat, for having read it twice he rang the bell on his desk to summon his secretary. Almost immediately the door opened, and a young French girl came into the room.

"Monsieur rang?"

"Have we ever had staying in the hotel a man called le Comte de Guy?" He leaned back in his chair and looked at her through his pince-nez.

The secretary thought for a moment and then shook her head. "Not as far as I can remember," she said.

"Do we know anything about him? Has he ever fed here, or taken a private room?"

"Not that I know of."

The manager handed her the letter, and waited in silence until she had read it.

"It seems on the face of it a peculiar request from an unknown man," he remarked as she laid it down. "A dinner of four covers; no expense to be spared. Wines specified and if not in hotel to be obtained. A private room at half-past seven sharp. Guests to ask for room X."

The secretary nodded in agreement.

"It can hardly be a hoax," she remarked after a short silence.

"No." The manager tapped his teeth with his pen thoughtfully. "But if by any chance it was, it would prove an expensive one for us. I wish I could think who this Comte de Guy is."

He took off his pince-nez and laid them on the desk in front of him. "Send the maitre d'hotel to me at once."

Whatever may have been the manager's misgivings, they were certainly not shared by the head waiter as he left the office after receiving his instructions. War and short rations had not been conducive to any particularly lucrative business in his sphere; and the whole sound of the proposed entertainment seemed to him to contain considerable promise.

And so at about twenty minutes past seven the maitre d'hotel was hovering around the hall-porter, the manager was hovering round the maitre d'hotel, and the secretary was hovering around both. At five-and-twenty minutes past the first guest arrived. . . .

He was a peculiar-looking man, in a big fur coat, reminding one irresistibly of a codfish.

"I wish to be taken to Room X." The French secretary stiffened involuntarily as the maitre d'hotel stepped obsequiously forward. Cosmopolitan as the hotel was, even now she could never hear German spoken without an inward shudder of disgust.

"A Boche," she murmured in disgust.

Almost immediately afterward the second and third members of the party arrived. They did not come together, and what seemed peculiar to the manager was that they were evidently strangers to one another.

The leading one—a tall gaunt man with a ragged beard and a pair of piercing eyes—asked in a nasal and by no means an inaudible tone for Room X. As he spoke a little fat man who was standing just behind him started perceptibly, and shot a birdlike glance at the speaker.

Then in execrable French he too asked for Room X.

"He's not French," said the secretary excitedly to the manager. "That last one was another Boche."

The manager thoughtfully twirled his pince-nez between his fingers.

"Two Germans and an American." He looked a little apprehensive. "Let us hope the dinner will appease everybody. Otherwise——"

But whatever fears he might have entertained with regard to the furniture in Room X, they were not destined to be uttered. Even as he spoke the door again swung open, and a man with a thick white scarf around his neck, so pulled up as almost completely to cover his face, came in. All that the manager could swear to as regards the newcomer's appearance was a pair of deep-set, steel-gray eyes which seemed to bore through him.

"You got my letter this morning?"

"M'sieur le Comte de Guy?" The manager bowed deferentially and rubbed his hands together. "Everything is ready, and three guests have arrived."

"Good. I will go to the room at once."

As he followed his guide his eyes swept round the lounge. Save for two or three elderly women of doubtful nationality, and a man in the American Red Cross, the place was deserted; and as he passed through the swing doors he turned to the head waiter.

"Business good?" he asked.

No—business decidedly was not good. The waiter was voluble. Business had never been so poor in the memory of man. . . But it was to be hoped that the dinner would be to Monsieur le Comte's liking. . . . Also the wines.

"If everything is to my satisfaction you will not regret it," said the count tersely. "But remember one thing. After the coffee has been brought in, I do not wish to be disturbed under any

"M'sieur le Comte de Guy?"

circumstances whatever." The head waiter paused as he came to a door, and the count repeated the last few words. "Under no circumstances whatever."

"Mais certainement, Monsieur le Comte. . . . I, personally will see to it. . . ."

As he spoke he flung open the door and the count entered. It cannot be said that the atmosphere of the room was congenial. The three occupants were regarding one another in hostile silence, and as the count entered they, with one accord, transferred their suspicious glances to him.

For a moment he stood motionless, while he looked at each one in turn. Then he stepped forward. . .

"Good evening, gentlemen"—he still spoke in French—"I am honored at your presence." He turned to the head waiter. "Let dinner be served in five minutes exactly."

With a bow the man left the room, and the door closed.

"During that five minutes, gentlemen, I propose to introduce myself to you, and you to one another. The business which I wish to discuss we will postpone, with your permission, till after the coffee, when we shall be undisturbed."

In silence the three guests waited until he unwound the thick white muffler; then, with undisguised curiosity, they studied their host. In appearance he was striking. He had a short dark beard, and in profile his face was aquiline and stern. The eyes, which had so impressed the manager, seemed now to be a cold grey-blue; the thick brown hair, flecked slightly with grey, was brushed back from a broad forehead. To even the most superficial observer the giver of the feast was a man of power; a man capable of forming instant decisions and of carrying them through. . . .

And if so much was obvious to the superficial observer, it was more than obvious to the three men who stood by the fire watching him. Each one of them, as he watched the host, realized that he was in the presence of a great man. It was enough: great men do not send fool invitations to dinner to men of international repute. It mattered not what form his greatness took—there was money in greatness, big money. And money was their life.

The count advanced first to the American.

"Mr. Hocking, I believe," he remarked in English, holding out his hand. "I am glad you managed to come."

The American shook the proffered hand, while the two Germans looked at him with sudden interest. As the man at the head of the great American cotton trust, worth more in millions than he could count, he was entitled to their respect. . . .

"That's me, Count," returned the millionaire in his nasal twang. "I am interested to know to what I am indebted for this invitation."

"All in good time, Mr. Hocking," smiled the host. "I have hopes that the dinner will fill in that time satisfactorily."

He turned to the taller of the two Germans, who without his coat seemed more like a codfish than ever.

"Herr Steinemann, is it not?" This time he spoke in German.

The man whose interest in German coal was hardly less well known than Hocking's in cotton, bowed stiffly.

"And Herr Von Gratz?" The Count turned to the last member of the party and shook hands. Though less well known than either of the other two in the realms of international finance, von Gratz's name in the steel trade of Central Europe was one to conjure with.

"Well, gentlemen," said the Count, "before we sit down to dinner, I may perhaps be permitted to say a few words of introduction. The nations of the world have recently been engaged in a performance of unrivaled stupidity. As far as one can tell that performance is now over. The last thing I wish to do is to discuss the war—except in so far as it concerns our meeting here tonight. Mr. Hocking is an American, you two gentlemen are Germans. I"—the Count smiled slightly—"have no nationality. Or rather, shall I say, I have every nationality. Completely cosmopolitan. . . . Gentlemen, the war was waged by idiots, and when idiots get busy on a large scale, it is time for clever men to step in. . . . That is the raison d'etre for this little dinner . . . I claim that we four men are sufficiently international to be able to disregard any stupid and petty feelings about this country and that country, and to regard the world outlook at the present moment from one point of view and one point of view only—our own."

The gaunt American gave a hoarse chuckle.

"It will be my object after dinner," continued the Count, "to try and prove to you that we have a common point of view. Until then—shall we merely concentrate on a pious hope that the Hotel Nationale will not poison us with their food?"

The next moment the head waiter opened the door, and the four men sat down to dine.

It must be admitted that the average hostess, desirous of making a dinner a success, would have been filled with secret dismay at the general atmosphere in the room. The American, in accumulating his millions, had also accumulated a digestion of such an exotic and tender character that dry rusks and Vichy water were the limit of his capacity.

Herr Steinemann was of the common order of German, to whom food is sacred. He ate and drank enormously and evidently considered that nothing further was required of him.

Von Gratz did his best to keep his end up, but as he was apparently in a chronic condition of fear that the gaunt American would assault him with violence, he cannot be said to have contributed much to the gaiety of the meal.

And so to the host must be given the credit that the dinner was a success. Without appearing to monopolize the conversation he talked ceaselessly and brilliantly. But to even the most brilliant of conversationalists the strain of talking to a hypochondriacal American and two Germans—one greedy and the other frightened—is considerable; and the Count heaved an inward sigh of relief when the coffee had been handed round and the door closed behind the waiter. From now on the topic was the topic of money—the common bond of his three guests. And yet, as he carefully cut the end of his cigar, and realized that the eyes of the other three were fixed on him expectantly, he knew that the hardest part of the evening was in front of him. Big financiers, in common with all other people, are fonder of having money put into their pockets than of taking it out. And that was the very thing the Count proposed they should do—in large quantities. . . .

"Gentlemen," he remarked, when his cigar was going to his satisfaction, "we are all men of business. I said before dinner that I considered we were sufficiently big to exclude any small arbitrary national distinctions from our minds. As men whose interests are international, such things are beneath us. I wish now to slightly qualify that remark." He turned to the American on his right, who with eyes half closed was thoughtfully picking his teeth. "At this stage, I address myself particularly to you."

"Go right ahead," drawled Mr. Hocking.

"I do not wish to touch on the war—or its result; but though the Central Powers have been beaten by America and France and England, I think I can speak for you two gentlemen"—he bowed to the two Germans—"when I say that it is neither France nor America with whom they desire another round. England is Germany's main enemy; she always has been, she always will be. I have reason to believe, Mr. Hocking, that you personally do not love the English?"

"I guess I don't see what my private feelings have to do with it. But if it's of any interest to the company you are correct in your belief."

"Good." The Count nodded his head as if satisfied. "I take it then that you would not be averse to seeing England down and out."

"Wal," remarked the American, "you can assume anything you feel like. Let's go to the show-down."

Once again the Count nodded his head; then he turned to the two Germans.

"Now you two gentlemen must admit that your plans have miscarried somewhat. It was no part of your original programme that a British army should occupy Cologne. . . ."

"The war was the act of a fool," snarled Herr Steinemann. "In a few years more of peace, we should have beaten those swine. . . ."

"And now—they have beaten you." The Count smiled slightly. "Let us admit that the war was the act of a fool, if you like, but as men of business we can only deal with the result. . . . The result, gentlemen, as it concerns us. Both you gentlemen are sufficiently patriotic to resent the presence of that army at Cologne, I have no doubt. And you, Mr. Hocking, have no love on personal grounds for the English. . . . But I am not proposing to appeal to financiers of your reputation on such grounds as those to support my scheme. . . . It is enough that your personal predilections run with and not against what I am about to put before you—the defeat of England . . . a defeat more utter and complete than if she had lost the war. . . ."

His voice sank a little, and instinctively his three listeners drew closer.

"Don't think I am proposing this through motives of revenge merely. We are business men, and revenge is only worth our while if it pays. This will pay. There is a force in England which, if it can be harnessed and led properly, will result in millions coming to you. . . . It is present now in every nation—fettered, inarticulate, un-co-ordinated. . . . It is partly the result of the war—the war that the idiots have waged. . . . Harness that force, gentlemen, co-ordinate it, and use it for your own ends. . . . That is my proposal. Not only will you humble that cursed country to the dirt, but you will taste of power such as few men have tasted before. . . ." The Count stood up, his eyes blazing. "And I—I will do it for you."

He resumed his seat, and his left hand, slipping off the table, beat a tattoo on his knee.

"This is our opportunity—the opportunity of clever men. I have not got the money necessary: you have." . . . He leaned forward in his chair, and glanced at the intent faces of his audience. Then he began to speak. . . .

Ten minutes later he pushed back his chair.

"There is my proposal, gentlemen, in a nutshell. Unforeseen developments will doubtless occur; I have spent my life overcoming the unexpected. What is your answer?"

He rose and stood with his back to them by the fire, and for several minutes no one spoke. Each man was busy with his own thoughts, and showed it in his own particular way. Comte de Guy stared unconcernedly at the fire, as if indifferent to the result of their thoughts. In his attitude at that moment he gave a true expression to his attitude on life. Accustomed to play with great stakes, he had just dealt the cards for the most gigantic gamble of his life. . . . What matter to the three men, who were looking at the hands he had given them, that only a master criminal could have conceived such a game? The only question which occupied their minds was whether he could carry it through. And on that point they had only their judgment of his personality to rely on.

Suddenly the American removed the toothpick from his mouth and stretched out his legs.

"There is a question which occurs to me, Count, before I make up my mind on the matter. Are you disposed to be a little more communicative about yourself? If we agree to come in on

"I Will Return in Ten Minutes. By That Time You Will Have Decided One Way or the Other."

this hand, it's going to cost big money. The handling of that money is with you. Wal—who are you?"

Von Gratz nodded his head in agreement. Steinemann raised his eyes to the Count's face as he turned and faced them. . . .

"A very fair question, gentlemen, and yet one which I regret I am unable to answer. I would not insult your intelligence by giving you the fictitious address of—a fictitious Count. Enough that I am a man whose livelihood lies in other people's pockets. As you say, Mr. Hocking, it is going to cost big money; but compared to the results the costs will be a flea-bite. You will have to trust me, even as I shall have to trust you. . . . You will have to trust me not to divert the money which you give me as working expenses into my own pocket. . . . I shall have to trust you to pay me when the job is finished. . . ."

"And that payment will be—how much?" Steinemann's guttural voice broke the silence.

"One million pounds sterling—to be split up between you in any proportion you may decide, and to be paid within one month of completion of my work. After that the matter will pass into your hands . . . and may you leave that cursed country groveling in the dirty . . ." His eyes glowed with a fierce, vindictive fury; and then, as if replacing a mask which had slipped for a moment, the Count was once again the suave, courteous host. He had stated his terms frankly and without haggling; stated them as one big man states them to another of the same kidney, to whom time is money and indecision or beating about the bush anathema.

"Perhaps, Count, you would be good enough to leave us for a few minutes." Von Gratz was speaking. "The decision is a big one, and . . ."

"Why, certainly, gentlemen." The Count moved toward the door. "I will return in ten minutes. By that time you will have decided—one way or the other."

**Enter Bull-Dog Drummond and Phyllis Benton.**

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

**Dream Has Various Meanings.**

To dream of a silver mine denotes trouble which will be settled by the courts. A gold mine, successful love suit. Iron mine, health and happiness. Copper mine, wealth, health and prosperity. Lead mine, unprofitable employment. Tin mine, slander. Zinc mine, discovery of a friend's treachery. Coal mine, brilliant future. Salt mine, dishonor.



**Mysterious Stove.**

At a recent electrical exposition a "mystic stove" attracted no little attention. This idea is by no means new; in fact, in one of its most spectacular forms it consists of a kettle of water boiling on a cake of ice. The solution of such mysteries is powerful magnetic induction, which causes the generation of powerful electric current in the pot, pan or kettle. The layman is, of course, greatly mystified, since water can be boiled, eggs fried, and so on, with no visible source of heat. The hand can be passed over the tapestry-covered table without feeling any trace of heat.—Scientific American.

**High Prices.**

The night cashier overheard a peculiar conversation in Beaver Crossing the other day. A farmer was in a store buying some groceries. "Want any flour?" asked the grocer. "No, flour's too high. I can git along without it." After a while the grocer said: "Sold your wheat, Bill?" "Nope; I'm going to hang onto mine; they ain't payin' nothin' for it yet."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

**Famous London Street.**

Grub street, London has been renamed Milton street. It was a street in which many writers lived who had not yet "arrived," so, because a general name for the haunts of needy writers.

**He's Married.**

"What's his present salary?"

"He says it's never present long enough to know!"—Wayside Tales.